

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a device coupled between a client and a server, the device having a configuration, the device to receive a message via one or more received packets and to process the message only if the received packets have one or more fields that match the configuration of the device, the device to forward the processed message via one or more packets having one or more fields that are different from the received packets.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the device comprises a device to forward the received packets with the one or more fields and the message that are unchanged if the one or more fields of the received packets do not match the configuration of the device,

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the device comprises one or more of a validator, a transformer and a content based switch.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise a destination IP address and destination port number.

5. An apparatus comprising:

a plurality of devices coupled between a client and a server, the devices having a same configuration, the devices to receive a message via one or more received packets and to process the message only if the received packets have one or more fields that match the configuration of the devices, the devices to forward the received packets with the one or more fields and the message that are unchanged if the one or more fields of the received packets do not match the configuration of the devices, the devices to forward the processed message via one or more packets having one or more fields that are different from the received packets.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the plurality of devices comprise a plurality of validators.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein at least one of the validators comprises a validation accelerator to validate XML documents or messages.

8. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the plurality of devices comprise a plurality of transformers.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein at least one of the transformers comprises a transformer to transform the message from a first format to a second format.

10. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the plurality of devices comprise a plurality of switches.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein at least one of the switches comprises a content based switch to switch the message to a selected processing node or server if the content of the message matches one or more predetermined patterns or values.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the content based switch comprises a content based switch to switch the message to a selected processing node or server if business transaction information in the message matches a predetermined pattern or value.

13. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise an address.

14. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise a destination address.

15. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise a destination address and destination port number.

16. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise a destination IP address and destination port number.

17. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the one or more fields that match the configuration of the device comprise a destination IP address and destination port number on which the devices are accepting connection requests.

18. An apparatus comprising:

a first device having a first configuration;

a second device coupled to the first device, the second device having a second configuration;

the first device to receive a message via one or more received packets and to process the message only if the received packets have one or more fields that match the configuration of the first device, the first device to forward the received packets to the second device with the one or more fields and the message that are unchanged if the one or more fields of the received packets do not match the first configuration.

19. The apparatus of claim 18 and wherein the first device to forward the processed message to the second device via one or more packets having one or more fields that match the second configuration.

20. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein each of the first and second devices one or more of a validator, a transformer and a switch.

21. A method comprising:
configuring a device;
receiving a message at the device via one or more packets;
processing the message only if the received packets have one or more fields that match the configuration of the device; and
forwarding the processed message via one or more packets having one or more fields that are different from the received packets.

22. The method of claim 21 and further comprising forwarding the received packets with the one or more fields and the message that are unchanged if the one or more fields of the received packets do not match the configuration of the device.

23. The method of claim 21 and further comprising:
generating a response message;
receiving the response message at the device via one or more packets;
processing the response message if the one or more packets of the response message match the configuration of the device.

24. An apparatus comprising a media having instructions thereon, the instructions resulting in the following when executed:

- configuring a device;
- receiving a message at the device via one or more packets;
- processing the message only if the received packets have one or more fields that match the configuration of the device; and
- forwarding the processed message via one or more packets having one or more fields that are different from the received packets.

25. The apparatus of claim 24 and further comprising: forwarding the received packets with the one or more fields and the message that are unchanged if the one or more fields of the received packets do not match the configuration of the device,